

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 19850 140224Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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R 131125Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7586
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 19850

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR OTRA VM TH
SUBJECT: DEPUTY FONMIN VISIT TO HANOI

REF: BANGKOK 19667

1. IN JULY 12 DISCUSSION WITH CHARGE, DEPUTY FONMIN WONG CONFIRMED THAT HE WOULD BE VISITING HANOI LATER IN THE MONTH. ANOTHER MFA OFFICER HAD EARLIER INDICATED VISIT IS AT THE INVITATION OF THE VIETNAMESE.

2. WONG EXPLAINED THAT HIS PURPOSE IN GOING TO HANOI WILL BE TO DISCUSS "CONCRETE" BILATERAL ISSUES. WONG SAID THAT THE RTG WANTS TO BRING FOCUS OF DIALOGUE WITH THE VIETNAMESE DOWN FROM GENERALITIES TO BASIC BILATERAL QUESTIONS WHICH WILL LEAEYD HE HOPED TO DISCUSS CIVIL AVIATION AND A VARIETY OF TRADE AND OTHER MATTERS. WHEN ASKED BY CHARGE, WONG SAID HE WOULD BRING UP THE QUESTION OF REPATRIATION OF THE LONG TIME VIETNAMESE REFUGEES, BUT THAT HE DOUBTED VIETNAM HAD MUCH INTEREST IN THIS. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT THE VIETNAMESE CANNOT REFUSE TO DISCUSS THE QUESTION ALTHOUGH ANY PROGRESS WILL BE VERY SLOW.

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3. WHEN ASKED WHETHER HE WOULD BRING UP THE ASEAN AND VIETNAM PROPOSALS REGARDING A ZONE OF PEACE AND FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY IN THE AREA, WONG SAID SUBJECT WOULD PROBABLY COME UP. HOWEVER, HE STRESSED THAT ANY DISCUSSION WOULD BE COMPLETELY INFORMAL. WONG INDICATED THIS IS A MATTER FOR THE ASEAN COUNTRIES TO DEAL WITH AND ANY FORMAL DISCUSSIONS WITH THE VIETNAMESE SHOULD BE THROUGH AN AGREED UPON ASEAN CHANNEL NOT BILATERAL. WONG SAID THAT

MFA IS NOT VERY ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT PRESSING QUICKLY ON THE VIETNAMESE PUBLIC STANCE. WONG NOTED THAT FOR THE PRESENT HE EXPECTED ASEAN COUNTRIES TO DEAL VERY CAUTIOUSLY WITH THE VIETNAMESE ZONE OF PEACE, INDEPENDENCE AND NEUTRALITY PROPOSAL AND MFA SENIOR OFFICERS THOUGHT THIS WAS THE BEST TACTIC.

4. COMMENT: OTHER ASEAN DIPLOMATS IN BANGKOK HAVE IN THE PAST WEEKS EXPRESSED SOME SENSITIVITY ABOUT THE THAI PENCHANT FOR PUBLIC STATEMENTS REGARDING THE VIETNAMESE PROPOSAL FOR ZONE OF PEACE, INDEPENDENCE AND NEUTRALITY. THEY HAVE INDICATED THAT THAI PUBLIC STATEMENTS, PARTICULARLY THOSE BY PRIME MINISTER KRIANGSAK, USUALLY HAVE COME AS A SURPRISE AND OTHER ASEAN PARTNERS WERE NOT OVERLY HAPPY. WONG INDICATED MFA SENSITIVITY TO THIS ASPECT AND SYMPATHY WITH ASEAN PARTNERS' CONCERNS.
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